



NEWS RELEASE

05-082

Date: Monday, February 28, 2005
District: 8 – San Bernardino
Contact: Terri Kasinga or Rose Melgoza
Phone: (909) 383-6290 or 383-6477

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATE ROUTE 138 RESTORATION

San Bernardino County – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) continues work to restore a portion of State Route 138 from Junction 18/138 to Crest Forest Drive to Crestline. SR-138 was closed on January 3, 2005 as a result of a heavy rainstorm that caused an enormous section of the slope to slide onto the route. In addition, two sections of the roadway began to slip from under the roadbed causing pavement failure. Since the initial damage, there have been several storms that have continued to erode the slopes, stalling progress.

The route was closed for approximately one week as Caltrans took measures to temporarily secure the slope and open the route on a limited basis under CHP escort for motorists. The escorts have been crucial to mountain residents and their livelihood. Due to several storms over the past few weeks, these escorts have been suspended twice. Caltrans and construction crews have worked diligently to monitor the slopes and to maintain the route so that the escorts could resume and allow access to the mountain community.

Damage to the mountain areas continues to increase. Every rainstorm brings more saturation and earth movement. Caltrans Senior Transportation Engineer, Fred Khosrowabadi and Geologist, Brian Hinman, have examined the damaged slopes on SR-138. Hinman stated, "Safety takes precedence over all else". The area of concern is a section of the slope approximately 350 feet above the route that measures approximately 100 feet across and four or more feet deep. The rift in the slope has grown from two inches wide in January to its current width of more than two feet. Caltrans plans to bring the slope down in a controlled environment weather permitting. Partial slope clearing has been done using different techniques and equipment. However, there is still more work to be done until this rift is completely eliminated. In the meantime, Caltrans continues to allow the daily escorts so commuters can avoid lengthy detours. The escorts will be stopped if public safety is threatened. Caltrans spokesperson Terri Kasinga said, "We just don't want anyone getting hurt. That's our first priority--- no injuries, no deaths".

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NEWS RELEASE

2-2-2-2

Plans to install layers of wire mesh on the slopes under the road along with reinforced soil are under way. A product called “geo-grid”, which is a type of netting made from tough nylon, will be used along with reinforced soil to rebuild the slopes. A technique called “shot-crete” – a type of concrete sprayed onto the slope that protects against erosion will also be used near drainage outlets and natural waterways .

Caltrans construction engineers have estimated it will take 30 working days to rebuild the slopes below and repair the roadway. However, weekly rainstorms have delayed significant progress. Estimates to open SR-138 are still targeted for March 31, 2005 but this date could be delayed by future storm activity in the region.

The plan is to open the road to traffic as soon as possible while long-term repairs continue. This will help commuters from Crestline and Lake Arrowhead avoid the lengthy and time-consuming detours. It is estimated that restoration repairs may take up to six months. Intermittent lane closures will be scheduled to rebuild the damaged mountain routes.

Long-term measures include draping the upper slope with steel mesh. The purpose of the mesh is to impede rockfall from landing on the roadway. The mesh was originally installed in summer 2004 as part of a project to stabilize the slope. The work on this project was suspended in winter 2004 due to inclement weather and was expected to resume in Spring 2005. The scope of the project will change due to recent damage to the existing slopes.

Two community meetings are scheduled this week to update local residents and merchants.

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Monday, February 28, 2005	Lake Arrowhead Resort 27984 Highway 189 Lake Arrowhead, CA	7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Tuesday, March 1, 2005	San Moritz Lodge 24640 San Moritz Drive Crestline, CA	7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

To get up-to-date information on mountain routes you may sign up for e-mail Advisory Bulletins for San Bernardino and Riverside counties at www.dot.ca.gov/dist8. Information may also be obtained by calling our Public Affairs Office at (909) 383-4631. An electronic version of photos available upon request.

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